

problem, he  
said.

of course, I told him, and  
that's why you must  
come back.

I think not, he  
said.

that's true, I told  
him, good  
day.

#### SELF-INVITES

well, put my ass on backwards, phone China, notify the  
iceman he forgot to deliver, run the birds off the wire,  
dial 911, buy a painting of a red dove and remember  
Herbert Hoover,  
what I am trying to say here is that 6 nights out of the  
last 8 there have been visitors, all self-invites, and  
like my wife says, "we don't want to hurt their feelings,"  
so we have sat about and listened to these, some of them  
famous and some of them not so, some of them fairly bright  
and entertaining, some of them not so  
but it all ends up as chatter, chatter, chatter, voices,  
voices, voices, a polite heady whirling of sound and  
there's a loneliness there: they all want to be recognized  
in one way or the other,  
they want to be listened to and that's understandable but  
I am one of those human beings who would rather sit quietly  
with his wife and 6 cats or I like to sit upstairs alone  
doing nothing.  
the idea is that I am selfish and that these people  
diminish me, and the longer I sit and listen to them  
the more I feel like a piece of dung but I don't get  
the idea that they feel like pieces of dung, I feel  
that they enjoy the sounds from their  
mouths  
and when they leave almost all of them make little gestures  
toward future visits.  
my wife is nice, makes them feel warm as they exit, she's  
a good soul, so good a soul that when, say, we eat out and  
get a table she always takes a seat where she can "see the  
people" and I take a seat where I can't.

all right, so I was forged by the devil: almost all  
humankind disinterests me and no, it's not fear although  
certain things about them are fearful, and it's not  
competition because I don't want



anything that they want, it's just that  
in all those hours of  
voices voices voices  
I feel nothing essentially either kind or daring or noble,  
and not the least bit worth all that time shot through  
the head  
and you remember when you used to run them out into the  
night instead of just letting them wear themselves  
down,  
those with their lonely wish for accolade, and you are  
ashamed of yourself for putting up with their mostly pure  
crap  
but then your wife would say or at least think,  
"do you think that you are the only living person on  
earth?"

you see, that's where the devil's got  
me.

so I listen to them and they are  
fulfilled.

#### HORSE FLY

the young man with his cap on backwards  
came up to me at the racetrack  
and asked, "who do you  
like?" and I answered,  
"don't you know that when you tell your  
horse to somebody else it never  
runs?"  
he acted as if he hadn't  
heard: "who do you like in the  
exacta?"  
"I don't bet exactas," I told  
him.  
"why?" he  
asked.  
"because they take a 20 percent  
cut," I responded.  
he acted as if that fact had nothing  
to do with anything.  
in a further effort to delete him from  
my existence  
I stated, "I don't bet daily doubles,  
parlays, quinellas or  
trifectas."  
it was useless: "who do you like  
in this race?" he  
repeated.